

## **Public Participation Plan for Bay Management Study\***

### **Purpose of this Public Participation Effort:**

- ☐ To provide good background information that supports informed decision making;
- ☐ To engage a broad spectrum of Maine people with varied expertise, experience and points of view on bay management; and
- ☐ To collect thoughtful, public suggestions on bay management in order that the Steering Committee and LWRC can make recommendations to the Legislature.

### **Desired Outcomes of this Effort:**

- ☐ An archive of information is compiled. It is organized and usable, and includes various opinions, needs, suggestions and information on specific embayments along the Maine coast;
- ☐ Positive and creative suggestions for bay management are generated;
- ☐ Ideas of technical merit able to be implemented politically and fiscally are identified; and,
- ☐ Identifiable impacts on the project's outcome result from the public's involvement

### **Process Steps for Creating the Public Participation Program:**

- ☐ Staff works with consultant (Pam Plumb) on rough outline of plan.
- ☐ Stakeholder groups and individuals are surveyed for suggestions on the public process (web based survey)
- ☐ Staff, using information from the stakeholders and the consultant, develops a suggested plan and presents it to the project Steering Committee.
- ☐ Changes are incorporated and the public participation plan is finalized by the Land and Water Resources Council.

### **What We Learned from Web-Based Survey**

- ☐ High number of people/organizations that want to be "highly involved". Ongoing e-mail communication is important.
- ☐ Organizations want to submit information (research, white papers, etc.) to be considered during the study
- ☐ Respondents favor small group meetings

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*\* This plan was approved by the LWRC at its 9/29 meeting with the understanding that the plan is open to modification as the study progresses and public participation needs are further identified and refined.*

## **Recommended Approach to Public Participation**

### **1. Consult Directly With Key Stakeholder Groups\***

*Purpose:* to engage those most likely to be heavily involved in this process to obtain early feedback and ideas.

- Reach out to key stakeholder groups (self-identified in survey or determined by prior high level of interest) early on to:
  - Inform them and invite them to participate in the public process
  - Ask what's important to them about bay management
  - Ask what data and background they want as part of the process – invite them to submit papers, research, examples, etc.
  - Inform them about opportunity later in the project to develop a management model for the "trial balloon" process

\*In some cases, where there are multiple people in a region with a high level of interest, plan components 1 & 2 may be combined.

*Time frame:* Fall 2004

### **2. Hold a Series of Preliminary meetings:**

*Purpose:* to get information out to people about the Bay Management Study, to identify what other information is needed, what people feel is working now or what needs change, and to identify governance issues.

- Held in 4-6 locations
- Invite all stakeholder groups and known interested parties directly
- Promote to general public through the media (see media plan)
- Agenda
  - Explain the origin, purpose and any parameters of the Bay Management Study
  - Present simple, easy to understand explanation of the current governance system with handouts which are graphic and easy to follow
  - Ask the group:
    - What are the governance issues?
    - What additional information do you need to make informed suggestions?
    - What is working now? What needs to change?
    - What would a fair, effective and practical bay management system look like?
  - Explain the next steps in the process and outline how public input will inform the process and results

*Meeting technique:* presentation for origin, purpose and parameters of the project and for definition of the current system; then, use small groups to generate information from those in attendance.

*Time frame:* January and February 2005

**3. Conduct Pilot Projects:** The pilot projects will be required as a condition of grant funding to develop and incorporate a public process of their own. See draft RFP for details about purpose and intended outcome of pilot projects.

*Time frame:* January through December 2005

#### **4. Participate in Omnibus Survey of Maine Households**

*Purpose:* to collect a sampling of general public opinion on coastal issues

- Look especially for the "inland" opinion and state wide interests which are less likely to be expressed in the meetings

*Time frame:* TBD

#### **5. Talks or Panel Presentations on Bay Management Topics**

*Purpose:* Provide an opportunity for interested parties, the public and the steering committee to learn about new ideas, techniques or technical topics associated with bay management. Encourage creativity and learning.

- On occasion, devote part of quarterly steering committee to presentation, panel discussion, etc. on different topics. Publicize the opportunity.
- Avoid point/counterpoint panel discussions, but rather encourage factual, non-biased information.
- Allow members of the public to ask questions of experts.
- Post summaries of talks on the website.

*Time frame:* TBD at quarterly steering committee meetings

#### **6. Mid-Course Workshops:**

*Purpose:* Through a two-part workshop, engage participants in learning and information sharing, and development of management models/ideas. Each workshop would be a day-long event.

##### **Workshop #1 "Learn and Discuss"**

*Purpose:* Keep participants engaged, encourage exchange of information, and provide staff with feedback. Require pre-registration and offer travel scholarships to encourage participation. Allow some flexibility for walk-in registrations.

- First half of meeting – Presentations, panel discussions, case studies. Pre-screen potential speakers to ensure lively, engaging talks. Topics might include aquaculture siting, roles of various governmental and non-governmental groups in coastal decision-making, pilot project results, etc. Provide an opportunity for participants to provide comments, suggest other sources of information, point to local data sources, etc. Post summaries of talks, white papers, etc. on the website for access by those not able to attend the workshop.
- In second half of meeting, divide participants into small groups of about 10 people. Provide an outline of discussion topics/questions related to the information shared and to the bay management study in general. Have at least one staff member present to take notes, answer questions (or make note of unanswered questions) and keep discussions on track.

*Time frame:* May, July, or September 2005

## Workshop #2 “Developing Management Options”

*Purpose:* Provide and opportunity for staff and other involved stakeholders to launch “trial balloons” on potential bay management schemes. Require pre-registration and offer travel scholarships to encourage participation.

- First half of meeting --Staff would offer one or more "trial balloons" on possible bay management systems. Other groups or individuals could offer other "trial balloons" for management systems; we would provide a format in advance for them as guidance; those submitting ideas would not need to present or defend them personally.
- The small group discussion process would capture people's reaction on what works or doesn't work in each "balloon"; which suggestion comes the closest to meeting their point of view; which aspects of different proposals do they particularly like (or dislike)

*Time frame:* TBD -- October or November 2005

## **7. Hold Final Public Meetings:**

*Purpose:* to build suggested management models which reflect the necessary compromises and include the different interests. The audience would be stakeholders and member of the public who have been involved throughout the process, as some knowledge of the information and ideas generated will be needed to make informed suggestions. Require pre-registration and offer travel scholarships to encourage attendance.

- Use a “charette” style meeting similar to land use planning meetings.
- Provide common data for everyone to work from based on the public information collected, the pilot program results and research, i.e. binders containing technical information, a summary of trial balloons and feedback from trial balloon session.
- Have people work at tables of 5-10 people selected to represent different points of view
- Stakeholder organizations would have a variety of members present working as individuals not empowered to make commitments on behalf of their organizations
- Agenda
  - Explain common information and the meeting process.
  - Have people work at their separate tables on the task of creating a recommended governance model for bay management that meets the needs of the participants as effectively as possible.
  - Have each table explain its model briefly.
  - Collect information on people's reactions to the various models.
  - Consensus on one model is NOT needed.

*Time frame:* January and February 2006

## **8. Invite Additional Comment on Staff Proposal**

*Purpose:* Allow participants and public to provide feedback on draft proposals.

- Staff brings together public input and research in to a single document (proposal) for the Steering Committee and the LWRC.
  - Staff generates the proposal and distributes it to stakeholders and participants in the process, inviting written comments
  - Staff presents proposal and reactions to it to the Steering Committee and the LWRC

*Time frame:* July and August 2006

## **9. Ongoing**

### **Information dissemination and communication:**

- Monthly email updates to interested parties list (self-identified through process; may be more inclusive than above stakeholder group)
  - Summarize recent events, ideas, meeting outcomes, etc.
  - Advertise upcoming meetings and participation opportunities
- Whenever possible, provide information in advance of meetings as well as at meetings that supports meeting topic. Have fact sheets/poster and other easy to read and understand documents.
- Provide meeting participants timely feedback on the summary as well as results of their participation.

**Media plan:** to inform the general public about the study, invite their participation at each activity, report on the meetings, highlight the pilots, report on recommendations

- Build individual connections with likely media reporters about the project
- Generate opening press releases about the overall project
- Solicit an opening feature article to call attention to the issue and the process
- Solicit coverage prior to each public event to encourage participation
- Encourage the media to report on the meetings

**Web site:** to provide ongoing information, reports on activities and notices of meetings

- Establish a web site for the Bay Management Study
- Put up information on the Study process and how to be involved
- Put up all information generated as background
- Announce all meetings and invite participation
- Collect email addresses for people who want to be notified of meetings and then send them notices of meetings
- Post all meeting minutes